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HOME REUNION SOCIETY.

TWO PAPERS UPON THE

RELATIONS OF THE

ENGLISH CHURCH TO NONCONFORMITY.

(From the Reports of the Society, for 1876—1877.)

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I.

ON THE RELATIONS OF

THE ENGLISH CHURCH TO NONCONFORMITY.

(SELECTED FROM THE REPORT OF THE SOCIETY, JUNE 29, 1876.)

THE prayer of our Blessed Lord (St. John xvii. 20-23) must have its fulfilment in a visible unity ; and to such an unity we have the promise of a greater glory, a greater and more perfect love, a greater and more perfect witness to the world of the truth of Christ's religion ; and, therefore, a promise by these means of a more certain, effectual, and speedy accomplishment of His Will.

It is this belief that must ever unite all true members of Christ's Body, wherever their lot on earth may be cast, in a longing desire that such perfect visible unity be attained.

But we may go a step further, and, without saying who is specially to blame for the present state of things, may boldly appeal to Holy Scripture to show that a state of schism and division among Christians is alien to the true principles of the religion of Christ.

We would quote here and elsewhere, by permission, from an able pamphlet :—*

“St. Paul's warnings on account of schism (I Cor. i, 10-12, and I Cor. xii, xiii, and elsewhere) are unmistakeable ; and yet of what did these schisms consist ? Of little more than party cliques within the Church—one Christian saying that he was of Paul, another that he was of Apollos, another complacently saying that he was of Christ. But surely, if even these comparatively small matters were wrong, it cannot be less improper when men go far

* “The Relation of the English Church to Nonconformity.” By George Venables, Vicar of Great Yarmouth. London : W. Wells Gardner. 1876.

greater lengths in rending the Seamless Robe, and quit the Communion of the Church altogether. If Dissenters came to Church for Baptism and Holy Communion, there would be some approach to the unity taught by St. Paul, but not even this is done, except in a few instances."

In our search for a return to that outward unity which we have lost, it will be well to look back to Apostolic times, to the times of the undivided Church, and also in our country to the reign of King Edward the Sixth, before divisions had made an inroad upon the unity of our National Church.

To quote again from the pamphlet above referred to :—

"After Pentecost the Christians were distinguished by four remarkable characteristics :—

"(1.) Steadfastness in the doctrines taught by the Apostles, who were told by Christ to make disciples of all nations, by baptizing them and teaching them to observe *all* things that Christ had taught to them.

"(2.) Steadfastness in the fellowship and Communion of the Apostles. They were not split into sects and parties, but all spake the same thing, and were perfectly joined in the same mind and judgment.

"(3.) Steadfastness in the Bread-breaking or Lord's Supper. Every (adult) Christian was a Communicant, and few, if any, would omit Communion on every Lord's Day.

"(4.) Steadfastness in the Prayers. There was pretty surely some known form of words from the beginning. The Jews were so accustomed to forms of prayer (in which Jesus Himself must often have joined) that it is in the highest degree probable that certain forms of words in prayer were used."

We then come to the times of the undivided Church after the Apostolic age, and find a common Bible, a common Creed, a common witness to the faith even unto death; the same sacraments, the same priesthood, the same Church government, under Bishops after the Apostolic model. And lastly in our own country we find ourselves one in the desire for a literal translation of the Bible and for a Service book in our own tongue, one as to Church government, one in a continued protest against the errors and corruptions with which the Church of England has wrestled so long.

If a secession from this outward unity had resulted in a large and united body of separatists it might have been fairly argued that such secession might tend towards a still greater unity, but history shows us that the essence of Nonconformity is to reproduce itself again and again even among those who apparently have the nearest sympathies.

“Men find it easier to withdraw from a corporate body and set up a party and community of their own than to submit their own will, or to sacrifice a little selfishness.”

On the other hand, a fair consideration of Church history would show that no small share of the blame attaching to subsequent divisions must be laid at the Church's door.

In the revulsion of feeling after the Marian persecutions, the Church was governed rather by political than by purely religious considerations, so that

“Many phases of Dissent (became) little else than an eager pursuit after some truth which the Church had ceased to recognize in her practice, and which cannot be lost without injury.”

And yet the Church really possessed all that was needed to supply the necessities and shortcomings, if she had only been ready to avail herself of her many facilities for usefulness.

From this spirit of Erastianism arose a bitterness, unknown before Queen Mary's reign, against those of the “old learning,” and a jealousy of the foreign Protestantism which deluged our shores in the reign of Elizabeth, and the consequent enactment of strict laws cruelly enforced against the Roman Catholic and Puritan Nonconformists.

Hence, as a rebound against such persecutions came the repudiation of Episcopacy by the Puritans, and the complete estrangement of the Roman Catholics.

Again in the last century, when this country was blessed with a great spiritual revival, the Church missed the opportunity of throwing herself thoroughly into the movement, being at that time too cold, too worldly, too indifferent to spiritual things to sympathise fully with so godly a manifestation.

While however acknowledging with deep sorrow the different causes of our past divisions, we must not omit thankfully to recognize the wonderful movements towards a more visible unity which God has, from various sources, vouchsafed to us in later years.

The removal of civil disabilities and the repeal of penal laws, though carried out mainly on political considerations, have directly undone much of the evil of former legislation; while the subsequent increase of scepticism (or at all events the greater prominence it has lately assumed) has directly tended (as did the persecutions of old time) to unite all Christians more truly in a common defence of the Christian faith. The fears raised by a more systematic effort, both at Rome and in the country, to exalt Rome's more distinctive doctrines and modes of Church government have tended to open the eyes of many Protestant Nonconformists to the importance of the Established Church as a sure bulwark against the attacks of the Roman Curia.

The greater spiritual life which, under distinct and apparently opposing schools of religious thought, has been gradually but surely growing up within the Church since the beginning of this century, as evidenced by the rapid growth of the Colonial Churches, by the increasing desire for preaching the Gospel to the heathen, and by her efforts to meet spiritual destitution at home, has gone far to remove cause for the sloth and supineness with which a too entire dependence on her endowments and on her worldly position had well nigh overwhelmed her in a previous age.

This increasing zeal with which the Church has been blessed has tended directly, in many ways, to the cause of reunion. Not only have the large contributions from her members, for the building and restoration of churches, and for the increase of home and foreign missions, given to her all the vitality of a voluntary association, but the practical work for the increase of Christ's Kingdom at home and abroad has directly tended to create fresh sympathies towards her from all the true members of Christ's Body.

Many have found, in carrying out a common work for the extension of Christ's Kingdom, that the same old and clearly marked lines are essential to success though they may have called the means employed by different names.

Growing out of this greater zeal to spread the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ comes the desire to open our churches for the use of all, at all times, and for various Services, and a concurrent desire for a relaxation of our uniformity laws to enable us to meet in different ways the varying needs of all classes of our people.

This increasing zeal has exposed a deficiency in the supply of agents to carry on Christ's work among us, and has created a demand for a distinct order of Evangelists; for a permanent Diaconate; and for a recognised Lay Agency, male and female, all which will tend to draw us somewhat nearer to Nonconformist organizations, and will pave the way for a complete supply of those deficiencies and neglects which, as we have before shown had so much to do with the first formation of divisions amongst us.

On the other hand, in the midst of many apparent estrangements, the Nonconformists, in many and unexpected ways, are drawing nearer to us. There is a growing sympathy on their part in all real spiritual work undertaken by the Church witnessed to

by the interchange of all hymns of a truly spiritual character, and to quote once more from the pamphlet :—

“The three Creeds are believed in by a large proportion of Dissenters. Episcopacy is certainly not the hateful thing in their estimation that once it was, forms and ceremonies once so much disliked are now used by not a few of their leaders. ”

And we may add, more ornate Services and more beautiful edifices have been accepted by them as good accessories to public worship.

There is a direct sympathy among the more religious of the Nonconformists with the Church's earnest endeavour to secure a religious education in our elementary schools, while there is an increasing desire among the ministers of the different sects to place themselves under regular training, and to seek Episcopal ordination.

The earnest question we would place before our members is—How can we best cherish, increase, strengthen these various proofs of a desire for a more visible unity which are spreading on every side ?

Certain methods are embodied in No. 3 of our Society's rules, but at such a critical period it becomes a prominent duty to circulate occasional papers and to recommend the best treatises drawn up in a Christian spirit which fairly and carefully discuss the existing points of difference between us ; and having thus prepared the way, to inaugurate conferences with Nonconformists, at first tentative and confidential, seeking points of agreement rather than points of difference ; on all occasions to be carefully undertaken, prepared for, and preceded by a course of fervent prayer for God's blessing upon the conference by members of all denominations who propose to take part in the same.

It may be after all that the perfect unity for which we long

in accordance with our Blessed Lord's prayer, may not be fully attained till the times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled—
“ When Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. ” But surely, as the time of the end draws nigh, it must be well fitting for all of us, whether Churchman or Nonconformist, to labour in earnest prayer, with watchfulness against our own individual shortcoming, and in patient hope for the blessed consummation.

II.

A SHORT REVIEW OF CANON CURTEIS' BAMPTON LECTURES.*

(FROM THE REPORT OF THE SOCIETY, JUNE, 1877.)

The leading points of these lectures will be brought in a condensed form under the reader's notice, in the hope that many may be induced to study the lectures for themselves.

Lect. I. The first point Mr. Curteis makes is that "dissensions are allowable and a sign of life in a Church until they culminate into the chronic disease of Dissent, which is not allowable."

He puts this proposition under three headings—

"(1.) That in all ages and countries where the Christian Church has found a footing there have *always* (from the very construction of the human mind) arisen parties in opposition to the prevailing and authorised methods, both of doctrine and of discipline.

"(2.) That this opposition and its resulting conflict is, in the ecclesiastical as well as every other kind of polity, the essential condition of vitality and movement.

"(3.) That while 'dissension' is both healthy and inevitable, yet, when it runs out into extreme forms, becomes exasperated by mismanagement or poisoned by the admixture of hatred, jealousy, and self-will, it then becomes a dangerous and chronic disease. It has grown into something which cannot easily be

* The Rev. G. H. CURTEIS' "Bampton Lectures for 1871, upon Dissent in its relation to the Church of England." (Macmillan and Co.)

cured. A chasm has been opened which renders reabsorption very difficult; and dissension (in one word) has ripened into Dissent."

His second point—the definition or description of the Catholic Church, in which these dissensions originate and from which this Dissent cuts itself off—is also most worthy of consideration.

A consideration of the parables of the kingdom (St. Matthew xiii, 31-50, xxii, 2) shows what the Church was intended to be. There we see "its tolerance of sinners, its breadth, its noble fearlessness of infection in carrying out Christ's work of redeeming mercy." St. Matthew xvi, 19, and xviii, 17, shews its authority; and St. John xvii, 21, shews its unity, and completes what may be called our Blessed Lord's own description of His Church. From this it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than the following:—

"(1.) That what our Lord intended to leave in the world was a society, beginning from a small germ and developing itself far and wide; commissioned expressly to take the largest possible sweep for embracing multitudes of every kind, whoever could be persuaded to come; and with the distinct function assigned to it of gathering in the weak, the young, and the ignorant, rather than of forming any sort of privileged club from which all such imperfect persons were to be excluded.

"(2.) That it was to be no chaos, but an *organized* society. The Incarnate Order and Reason of the universe was not likely to bequeath to us an anarchy: and we have seen how He Himself carefully selected and personally commissioned the first office-bearers in His new kingdom for the special purpose He had in view.

"(3.) That this purpose was simply and purely an *educational* one. The society was, above all other things, not to be exclusive and selfish, as if for enjoyment. It was to be the self-forgetting,

self-hazarding agent of His own vast and expansive charity. And therefore, like Himself, it was not to stop and ask if this man was a publican or that man a Samaritan; but to gather up its armfuls of the strayed, the lost, the weak, the young, the victims of nature, of man, of their own passions or folly; and to 'set them once more among princes by giving them a home, with love and training in it, and all that makes men human, cheerful, healthful and (in the best sense of the word) natural.'

"(4.) That the ultimate object of all this machinery was not to create (in any sense whatever) a privileged class—not to maintain a hierarchy or an endowed establishment, for their own sakes (God forbid!)—but simply the pure and Christian purpose of *saving souls*; of sealing down upon them, when the wax is hot, the impression of Christianity; stamping it down in sacraments, and rituals, and sermons; and setting before them a visible example of the peace, and joy, and health that dwell in His household, and are the natural inheritance of His children."

If, as we believe, this is a true definition of what Christ's Church was intended to be, what a lesson have we, both Churchmen and Dissenters, to learn from our hindrance of His work, and from the defamation of this more perfect reflection of Himself, in His purity, and truth, and love, which our respective shortcomings have occasioned.

Too soon was the unhappy lesson accepted that it was a righteous act to put down heresies by the temporal sword; hence arose the *auto da fés* of the Inquisition; hence "the fires of Smithfield for the Lollards, and of Oxford for Reformers. And when their accursed work was done, and the last flame died down in England upon the blackened corpse of a Socinian, in the market-place of Lichfield, A.D. 1612, then, within less than forty years, a ruined Church, an overthrown State, and the frantic triumph of sectarianism and anarchy proclaimed to all the world the utter

failure of compulsion in religion. Men have thus been brought, by slow degrees, to see at last that force and persecution were the weapons of Antichrist, and not of Christ; and that charity, courtesy, and honest explanation were the only fitting weapons of a warfare which is 'not carnal but spiritual,' and whose only lasting victories are gain by 'in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves' (II. Tim. ii, 25)."

It was thus that much of the old breadth and charity of the Church of Christ was clouded. And though it is popularly supposed, especially among the Independents, that they were preserved in full measure by the persecuted ones when lost by the persecuting Church, history gives an unequivocal denial to such a view. "Not only the founders but the earliest champions and martyrs of Independency as earnestly repudiated 'toleration' as the Churchmen and Presbyterians, and perhaps every human being at that time, repudiated it."

"Luther invoked the civil sword against the Anabaptists; Calvin burnt Servetus; Cranmer burnt Jane Boucher; and of Cartwright a Dissenting writer says:—'Parker and Whitgift persecuted the Puritans; but if Cartwright had been in Whitgift's place he would have dealt equal persecution to Baptists and Independents.' Independents, when they had the power, as in America, persecuted their opponents as fiercely and unrighteously as they had themselves been persecuted, verifying Cromwell's saying, 'That hath been one of the vanities of our contest. Every sect says, 'O give me liberty!' But give it to him, and to his power and he will not yield it to anybody else.'"

And this brings us to consider the real origin of this persecuting spirit, a spirit which we find permeating all bodies of Christians—Churchman and Dissenter alike—leading us away by imperceptible degrees from our Blessed Lord's idea, as shown us plainly in the Gospels, "of what His Kingdom of Heaven should be."

The Apostles themselves showed at first a leavening of this *spirit of Intolerance*, when they asked for fire from Heaven on the city that had rejected their Master, and they were rebuked—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." When they forbade one casting out devils because he followed not with them, they were rebuked—"Forbid him not, for no one that can do miracles in My Name can lightly speak evil of Me." Exclusiveness, again, is the spirit of the self-righteous Pharisee, who was offended because our Lord ministered to the publicans and sinners, and was rebuked by the words: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance;" and by the language of St. Paul, II Cor. x. 12, against those who measure. "It is, in a word, the (false) conception that the Church was intended by its Author to be a social and not an educational brotherhood; a club for enjoying happy Christian fellowship, and not a school for bringing men gradually to Christ; to be, in short, a select and *exclusive* circle of Heaven's favourites, instead of a broad and *inclusive* net for sweeping in all of every kind."

Surely this is very little other than the Pharisaism so openly and continuously rebuked by our Lord. Surely those who are leavened with such a spirit are drifting far from the example of Christ, and from being fellow-workers with Him; and yet *the leaven of this spirit*, though intensified by Calvinism, was in the Church long before Calvin, and is in it now—yea, in each man's inmost heart; for we are ever inclined to judge others by our own standard of goodness. All stricter than ourselves are scoffed at—all who have not attained to the same outward appearance of perfection and respectability are condemned.

If the Church's connection with the State were of use in no other way, it at least keeps down this spirit of exclusiveness; for Hume goes very near the truth in crediting no denomination with

the virtues of toleration, saying, "If among Christians the English and Dutch have embraced the principles of toleration, this singularity has proceeded from the steady resolution of the civil magistrate." And yet the Church of England is modelled on the original or Gospel conception of what the Church should be; and while she insists on safeguards at the admission of her teachers, she leaves her ordinary members the greatest freedom. "Our own Church requires from its lay members no confession of faith except that contained in the Apostles' Creed." (Bishop Harold Browne on the Articles, p. 11).

"And as for the Thirty-nine Articles, they are a sketch of framework of sound doctrine, by which the Church takes engagements from her clergy and other teaching officers. But even if these contravene them, she does not necessarily excommunicate such men, but leaves them to retire into lay communion."

It is true that within the Church there are numbers known to God, and in some cases, by the answering of heart to heart, to each other also, as among His holy ones; but these dare not arrogate to themselves an exclusive claim. Our Lord taught that "there are first that shall be last, and last that shall be first; and there may be many a penitent to be called, for their humble witness and amazing love to Christ, who, perchance, will enter before these into the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Let us proceed with Mr. Curteis to the consideration of how these two evils, so nearly allied to each other, of *intolerance* and *exclusiveness*, have made rents in the Seamless Robe, under the various forms of Dissent amongst us, and learn from the lessons of this past experience some way back into the old paths from which Church and Dissent have fallen—by amending those original evils which in each case caused fresh rents as the ready remedy.

Lect. II. *The Independents*, though, as history reveals to us, persecutors in their turn, left the Church for the rights of freedom of conscience. "And if the Independent refuses to conform, secedes from the Church, and then fights a long and vigorous battle for complete political and social toleration—barring the first false step—he is a man worthy of all respect and honour. The complete toleration he valiantly demands he has a perfect political right to attain. Nor will he fail in the course of its attainment to teach his country, and even the Church which he has left, some valuable lessons of liberty, until time shall come that he will learn from her in his turn the inestimable value of Christian obedience, and the invincible strength gained by ecclesiastical cohesion, and shall see how far grander and Christ-like a thing it is to bend one's will to duty than to stand stiffly and jealously upon one's private right" (see St. Paul; Phil. ii. 1-14).

Indeed, the most important truths which the Independents have emblazoned on their banner are *simply an essential part of the acknowledged teaching of the Church of England*, viz., the ecclesiastical rights of the laity, and the urgent need of guarding Christendom against secular corruptions from without. But, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that SHE can teach these things without danger of extremes, for she balances them carefully by many other compensating truths, and so keeps them in due subordination to the analogy of the faith.

Lect. III. The *Romanists* were the next to break away from the Church of these realms, on the ground that a *despotism* was the only divinely ordered Christian polity. And is not this despotism, as at present exercised, nothing else than the realisation of that spirit of intolerance so alien to the Gospel view of the kingdom? Yet there is a caution to us in this secession against too lax a discipline and too common a disobedience to all constituted authority; although it has resulted in a complete abandonment

of everything that is national, and a breaking with the past. "And while at this hour, in every cathedral and parish church throughout the land, the old English Service-books are (in a revised and condensed form) daily and weekly to be heard, in the Romanist chapels, on the contrary, scarcely anything English is to be heard or seen. The modern Roman Rituals have supplanted everywhere those of the ancient English Church; and, while to this hour on the Episcopal thrones, and on the benches of Parliament, are to be seen the direct successors of Chichele, Langton, Anslem, Dunstan, Augustin, the Roman succession, being a foreign importation of Roman not of Anglican orders, appears as an Episcopate with no roots in the country, governing apart from the old Canon law, which was the guard of the priesthood and Episcopate alike against despotic power.

It is true that by our past neglects and our habits of self-depreciation we have encouraged Romanists in their schism. But after all the work of the Church of England has not been a mean one in the cause of Christ. "We have attempted and by His blessing gone far to succeed in planting Christ's banner upon the citadel of a free and modern State, to infuse Christianity into the very nerves and veins of an adult and fully organised nation, and to consecrate—not curse or secularize—science, family life, political life!"

Surely in doing this we have more fully performed the duty of the old Catholic Church of this nation than has been done by those who have gone out of her, in allegiance to a foreign despot, and in so doing have denationalized themselves altogether.

Lect. IV. *The Baptist*, on the other hand, from another point of view, opposes the Gospel ideal by adopting as its own *the exclusiveness* of Calvin. There were three grand principles, for the sake of which they held themselves justified in making a secession—
 "(I.) The maintenance of more strictly Calvinistic doctrine.
 (II.) For the exercise of a more rigorous and exclusive discipline.

(III.) For the practice of a more literally Scripture ritual, especially in the matter of Baptism.”

(1.) This was a protest against the worldliness which has far too much crept into the Church. This worldliness is innate in human nature, began with Judas, and has been more or less in the Church ever since, and does not date from Constantine, as those disposed to treat it as of the essence of Establishment would maintain.

(2.) Another lesson to be learnt from the history of this secession is the mischievous folly of persecution in order to insure the uniform profession of the national religion. For history reveals the fact that at certain periods “the rulers of the Church lent themselves far too readily to the merely political purposes of the State.

(3.) And there is yet a third and by no means unimportant lesson to be learnt by the Church from the Baptists, on the subject of Baptism itself, and of Church discipline with which that rite is closely connected. We must admit her carelessness in looking after the baptized who have but entered as scholars into the fold to be instructed carefully in all godliness; nay, more, we must admit her insufficient teaching, which has caused her real doctrine on this subject to be woefully misunderstood; her want of zeal in winning adult converts to the faith, and her neglect of immersion, which is the rule, for affusion, which is the exception (“It shall *suffice* to pour water upon it”).

Lect V. The *Quakers* Mr. Curteis describes as follows:—

“The majestic truth which George Fox travailed with was, in a few words, that department of the Church’s Creed which was not then—nay, I am bold to say is not now—brought out into its full significance: ‘I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life.’

“Behold, accordingly, this child-like soul, this man of one Book—but that Book the Bible—steps forth amid the confused Babel that called itself the English Christianity in the seventeenth century to bear testimony in the Name of God to all these things that the sects were battling over.”

“It is not in the *affirmations* of George Fox, but in his *denials*, that the Church of Christ meets him and repudiates his teaching. And yet Quakerism has been enabled to infuse the spirit and essence of George Fox’s teaching into the very veins of the modern world ; it has all but put down slavery ; it is on its way, I hope, to put down war.”

“(1.) His first great doctrine is this (and it is also the doctrine of the Catholic Church), that the visible and outwardly organised Church, with all her hierarchy and canons, her ritual, her creeds, her sacraments, is nothing more than the shell (as it were) of the living creature, the scaffolding of the real building, the *means* and not the *end*, the casket and not the jewel.” And in so far as the members of the Church are prone at times to forget such a truth, it was a thing to be thankful for that such a witness should be given.”

(2.) The second great doctrine was that of “the *universal inward light*,” “by which he (in common with the Catholic Church) protested against the errors of Calvin.” We needed this witness : for the bigotry of Bible worship, and of schemes worked out by individual readings of particular texts, had subdued and constrained the free worship of the Spirit in the hearts of men. But the Church Catholic has never forbidden “her sons to recognise in the gentle whispers of their Christian conscience—in the strong wrestlings of some inward conflict, in the sweet and full conviction of some glorious truth, in the passages of a friendly filial walking with God—the adorable and neither mute nor insensible Presence of the Holy Spirit.”

(3.) A third great doctrine to which the early Quakers witnessed was the Church's "doctrine of sanctity," as a protest against the strong conviction which had grown up amongst some that the elect of Heaven remain such, be they of what moral character they may—which is nothing else than a divorce of morality from religion. But all these things, good as they are and of use in counterbalancing other truths in the Church itself, when divorced from the Church run into error. It was thus that a tendency to ultra-spiritualism was engendered, which rejected the sacraments and denied to them and to the beautiful symbolism of the Church that interpretation by the Holy Spirit which they allowed would give life to the types and symbolism of the Old Testament.

Lect. VI. The two last sects which Mr. Curteis describes are the *Unitarians* and *Wesleyans*."

Of *Unitarianism* he prefaces that the name is entirely misleading, and that the great majority of them do believe in the Divinity of our Lord and of the Holy Ghost, but object to these things being set forth in what they call the terminology of metaphysics as they are at present set forth in the Church. God grant that it may be so, as there might be thus some hope of union with them also. And it must never be forgotten that the Church, in her Athanasian Creed, never undertook to define how these things can be, but that the whole Creed, where it at all goes beyond the Apostles' Creed, is, like the Nicene Creed, defensive, and denies metaphysical heresies which attacked the true faith, and one by one, when worked out into their consequences, resulted in a direct denial of some great Bible truth. For after all it is an absolutely certain fact "*that it was purely and entirely in defence of the unbroken and inviolable 'Unity' of God that the whole doctrine of the Trinity was evolved by the Church.*"

Their original protest was made “in defence of *intellectual freedom within Christ's Church*,” and at the time it was made the Puritans had built up “a chaotic body of self-constituted and half-instructed interpreters of Holy Scripture, from whom no mercy or freedom was to be expected,” and which, where it had free play, was binding men's minds with a more cruel bondage than Rome had ever attempted to impose.

And have not we something to learn from the secession ; Have we not, from the leaven Puritanism within the Church, neglected too much to minister to the higher intellectual spirits among us, looking upon them with too complete an antagonism, forgetful how the Church Catholic from the earliest age “had from every philosophy, as it successively sprang up, employed its utmost energies to draw and fix for the Church's use whatever was most pure and sound and available” ?

Lect. VII. We turn now to the latest of our divisions, which teaches us a lesson of past neglect in the contrary direction ; for if *Unitarianism* reminds us of our neglected duty towards the more intellectual few, *Wesleyanism* reminds us of our past neglect of the uneducated many. Wesleyanism began in a distinctly friendly spirit, and with an earnest desire to supply the Church's then glaring deficiencies by forming within her an energetic body of men who would work for her where her regular officers had neglected their duty, and work for her on the old lines of that primitive Christianity to which she had ever appealed, but in an Erastian age had well nigh forgotten. Wesley's own words are—
“I declare that I live and die a member of the Church of England and none who regard my opinion or advice will ever separate from it.”

Nevertheless the separation has widened, and the small beginnings of the difference, notwithstanding the comparatively slight

amount of opposition by the Church, teach us the ever-important lesson, "to guard against the danger of drifting into disunion, and of pushing our ecclesiastical dissensions to the sad extremity of mutual alienation and of actual dissent." Want of sympathy was the main cause here ; for, as in the other cases, the Catholic Church of England could have fully worked with these men, and in working with them guarded against the extremes into which they subsequently ran by the compensating truths which she also holds. But when the Wesleys arose the Church had drifted far from her first love, and had lost the lesson that stands in the forefront of the Gospel, "to condescend to men of low estate."

She had not indeed the exclusiveness of a higher spiritual life which the Calvinist held to be the Church's ideal, but the exclusiveness of worldly caste, an indifference to anything that was not strictly orthodox and respectable, and so the energies of the Wesleyans were allowed to drift away.

Lect. VIII. The Church of England is now by God's mercy waking up fully to her spiritual responsibility. As the Church of this whole nation she has learnt that she is not a class Church, but for all ; and for the lowest in the world's estimation more essentially than for any others. To the politician, whether Churchman or Dissenter, there can be no end to strife. The warfare of the past has stirred up animosities which nothing but a full practical acceptance of the great truths of the Gospel can ever sweep away. Mr. Curteis' book will reveal to us faults enough in the Church among the Dissenters, which a political and worldly spirit may work up from time to time to feed the flame. while the old watchwords of prelacy and priestcraft, disendowment and disestablishment, are cries under which the conflict can be maintained to the bitter end.

But with the politician we have nothing to do. It is to the

Nonconformist who holds the essential truths of Christianity, who is very zealous for the honour of his Lord and Master—his and ours—that we would appeal. We do not deny that there are many evils to be removed before the Church of England can fully and efficiently discharge her duty as the one true branch of the Catholic Church to this great people; but now that it has pleased God to re-endow her with great spiritual life, we would ask the religious Nonconformists, who must prayerfully sympathise with all the Church's works against sin and error, whether adherence to the Church of their fathers would not be more likely to complete the work of God amongst us than a continued opposition.

If our review of Mr. Curteis' book has done anything, it must have taught us this: That if the Church had not gone from its old love into a persecuting spirit, if Nonconformity had not committed itself to the equally false chimera of Calvinistic exclusiveness, the distinctive truths and sides of truths to which Nonconformists have from time to time borne witness would have much more quickly leavened the Church of their fathers; while the extremes into which they have run, because separated from the Church, would have been kept in their proper place in the analogy of faith by the counterbalancing truths of Catholic teaching. It is a sign of weakness that the sects have forgotten their old distinctive protests against one another, often enforced by the direst persecutions, and have united together in a joint and determined attack against the Church of their fathers. But Mr. Curteis' advice to the Church is important:

“It is true that many of these separated bodies appear now to be weakening, to be diminishing in numbers, and falling apart into innumerable fragments. But this fact does not in any way affect the question. We are all bound, by our duty to our

brethren and to God, to 'follow peace with all men.' We are bound to study every method of conciliation and of mutual good will. We are under the strictest obligation to explain, as clearly as we can, both to the Dissenters and to our less instructed people, the true position and standing purpose of the Church of England.

“And as to the present embittered assaults—which probably indicate a consciousness that the power of making them is rapidly passing away—every Churchman should remember that the only revenge which Christ has taught us that of returning good for evil. The only retaliation possible to the follower of the meek and lowly Jesus is to ask clearly and simply, ‘Why smitest thou me?’ The only offensive warfare allowable to a Christian is ‘to instruct in meekness them that oppose themselves.’”



